UNITED
NATIONS

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General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

A/53/868
S/1999/303
17 March 1999
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-third session
Agenda item 72 (d)
REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONCLUDING DOCUMENT OF THE TWELFTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY: REGIONAL CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES: ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS STANDING ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SECURITY QUESTIONS IN CENTRAL AFRICA

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-fourth year

Letter dated 9 March 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Cameroon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to inform you that the heads of State and Government of the countries of Central Africa met in Yaoundé from 25 to 26 February 1999 in the framework of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa.

At the conclusion of this summit conference, they created a mechanism for the prevention and settlement of conflicts in Central Africa and adopted a declaration on peace and security (see annexes).

I should be grateful if you would have the two attached texts, together with this letter, circulated as documents of the fifty-third session of the General Assembly under agenda item 72 (d), and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Martin BELINGA-EBOUTOU
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

ANNEX I

Decision on the creation of a mechanism for promotion, maintenance and consolidation of peace and security in Central Africa, adopted on 25 February 1999 by the heads of State and Government of the Central African countries

The Summit Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Central African countries,

Concerned by the multiplication and intensification of conflicts in the sub-region,

Reaffirming their commitment to peace and security, as guarantees of stability and prosperity,

Recalling the Non-Aggression Pact signed at Yaoundé on 8 July 1996,

Bearing in mind the need for all the States in the subregion of Central Africa to sign and ratify this Non-Aggression Pact in order to create the conditions for peaceful coexistence and confidence,

Bearing in mind also all the decisions taken and commitments made in the framework of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa,

Reaffirming their commitment to the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes established in the Charter of the United Nations and of the Organization of African Unity,

Wishing to further strengthen the ties of cooperation between the States of Central Africa, which are confronted by critical situations and risks of instability,

DECIDES:

Article 1

To create a mechanism for the promotion, maintenance and consolidation of peace and security in Central Africa, to be known as the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX).

Article 2

The aim of COPAX is the prevention, management and settlement of conflicts in Central Africa, together with other activities to promote, maintain and consolidate peace and security in the subregion.

Article 3

The Ministers for Foreign Affairs and of Defence/Armed Forces will meet in Yaoundé as soon as possible in order to draw up the draft terms of reference for the mechanism referred to in article 1 and propose them to the heads of State and Government of Central Africa during the summit meeting of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) to be held in Equatorial Guinea in April 1999. Cameroon will convene this ministerial meeting.

Done at Yaoundé on 25 February 1999 by the following heads of State and Government or their representatives:

For the Republic of Angola:

For the Republic of Burundi:
(Signed) Pierre BUYOYA
President of the Republic

For the Republic of Cameroon:
(Signed) Paul BIYA
President of the Republic

For the Central African Republic:
(Signed) Ange-Félix PATASSÉ
President of the Republic

For the Republic of the Congo:
(Signed) Denis SASSOU NGUESSO
President of the Republic

For the Democratic Republic of the Congo:
(Signed) Jean-Charles OKOTO
Minister for Foreign Affairs

For the Gabonese Republic:
(Signed) DIDJOB DIVUNGI DI NDINGE
Vice-President of the Republic

For the Republic of Equatorial Guinea:
(Signed) Angel-Seraphin SERICHE DOUGAN
Prime Minister

ANNEX II

Yaoundé Declaration on Peace, Security and Stability in Central Africa, adopted on 25 February 1999

1. At the invitation of His Excellency Mr. Paul Biya, President of the Republic of Cameroon and current Chairman of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, the heads of State and Government of Central Africa met in Yaoundé from 25 to 26 February 1999 to review the social and political situation in the subregion.

2. They reaffirmed their commitment to the fundamental principles set forth in the Charters of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, in particular:

- the sovereign equality of all States;
- non-interference in the internal affairs of States;
- respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of each State;
- the inviolability of boundaries inherited from the colonial period;
- the right to peace and security;
- respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

3. They engaged in an in-depth exchange of views on the situation in the subregion. In that regard, they expressed deep concern over the persistence of and increase in tensions and in internal and inter-State armed conflicts which result in loss of human lives, displacement of populations, destruction of infrastructure and institutions, thereby impeding development efforts in Central Africa.

4. They also took note of the threats to stability and security posed by cross-border crime and by the trafficking in and illicit circulation and proliferation of weapons of war.

5. They explored ways and means of contributing to the prevention, containment and settlement of disputes and to the maintenance of peace, security and stability in Central Africa.

6. They reaffirmed their willingness to engage in dialogue and consultations and to show understanding and tolerance in order to settle disputes between peoples and to create a stable and safe environment that is conducive to development.

7. They charged the Committee's Bureau with the task of approaching the United Nations with a view to finalizing the agreement for the funding of military exercises and peacekeeping operations proposed for Central Africa by the Committee at its tenth special meeting.

8. They issued an urgent appeal to the States of the subregion to establish as a matter of urgency national follow-up committees as had been reiterated at the Committee's tenth ministerial meeting.

9. They also appealed to States to take all necessary measures to ensure that their parliaments enacted legislation to combat the proliferation of private armed militias.

10. They agreed to take joint action to establish and preserve peace and security, which was a prerequisite for the economic integration and development of the States of the subregion.

11. They also reaffirmed their commitment to the strengthening of security in the subregion by combating acts of destabilization against any member State.

12. They also stressed the urgent necessity for the Governments of the subregion to do everything in their power to reduce and if possible eliminate the causes of conflict within their societies in order to promote unity, peace, security and stability.

13. They expressed satisfaction at the framework for consultations which the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa afforded. They also expressed satisfaction at the work which had been accomplished within this framework and which had resulted in the signing of the Non-Aggression Pact currently in the process of being ratified, together with the design of a draft mutual assistance pact and a draft agreement on the terms of reference of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX), as well as in discussions aimed at the establishment of other institutions for the promotion of peace and security.

14. They recognized that the achievement of lasting peace and development in Central Africa required the solidarity and full cooperation of all the countries of the subregion. To that end, they have decided to establish a body for the promotion, maintenance and consolidation of peace and security in Central Africa to be known as the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX).

15. They have instructed their Ministers for Foreign Affairs and of Defence/Armed Forces, the Interior and Security to meet as soon as possible to finalize the draft terms of reference of this new subregional institution. These terms of reference will be submitted for the approval of the heads of State and Government at the next summit meeting of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) to be held in Malabo in April 1999.

16. They endorsed the conclusions of the earlier ministerial meetings of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, including the meetings held in Libreville, Bata and Yaoundé in 1998, and requested that these conclusions should be taken into account in future meetings.

17. Deeply concerned at the persistence of tensions, conflicts and crises in Central Africa, they expressed their determination to promote respect for human rights and freedoms and for the establishment of the rule of law and of

democratic political systems that permit the full participation without exclusion of all sectors of society in the political life of each country.

18. Convinced that peace and development are inextricably linked, they stressed the need for the States of the subregion to pool all of their resources and efforts to improve the living conditions of their peoples and, in particular, of the most disadvantaged sectors of their societies. They also recognized that the debt burden borne by their countries was such that it impeded their efforts to achieve development. To this end, they appealed to their bilateral and multilateral partners so that an appropriate solution could be found to this intractable problem.

19. They declared that efforts to eliminate poverty must be one of the principal areas of concern of their countries if they are to achieve lasting peace. They strongly emphasized that the difficult economic situation of the countries of Central Africa was a factor of instability which threatened international peace and security and called upon the international community and, in particular, the international financial institutions to provide increased support for their economic recovery efforts.

20. They stressed the need for closer cooperation and exchanges of many kinds between their countries, in particular through the revitalization of regional economic integration programmes, in order to encourage more interaction among their peoples and to instil into their values a genuine culture of peace and dialogue.

21. They expressed deep concern over the continuing conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo which carries grave risks of destabilizing the entire subregion.

22. They further welcomed the progress made by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in seeking dialogue with all the political forces and in opening up the political arena in order to completely defuse existing tensions.

23. Recalling the Declaration issued by the Central African heads of State and Government at the conclusion of their meeting in Libreville on 24 September 1998, together with those from other international meetings such as the France-Africa summit meeting held in Paris, the Victoria Falls II regional summit meeting, the summit meeting of the Central Organ of the Organization of African Unity Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution held in Ougadougou, the Windhoek summit meeting and the Lusaka meetings, they appealed for a ceasefire in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of hostile foreign forces, respect for sovereignty and the democratization process and the institution of dialogue between all the political forces.

24. They commended Chad for sending a military contingent to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and expressed their full support for that country.

25. Bearing in mind the spirit of the Libreville Declaration of 24 September 1998, and expressing their grave concern at the deteriorating situation in Angola and at the stalling of the peace process in that country,

they called on the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) to comply with the peace agreements, the Lusaka Protocol and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

26. They appealed urgently to all the parties to demonstrate a firm commitment to the peace process and to national reconstruction, bringing an end to the ongoing and appalling suffering of the Angolan people, particularly those who have been displaced.

27. Concerned about the worrying situation in Angola, they appealed urgently to the countries of the subregion and to the international community to provide all the necessary support to ensure the success of the peace process in that country.

28. They paid tribute to the memory of Alioune Blondin Beye, to the members of his team and to all the United Nations staff members that had died tragically in Angola for their invaluable contribution to the quest for peace in that country.

29. They acknowledged that the full implementation of the Bangui Agreements and the National Reconciliation Pact was vital to peace and national reconciliation in the Central African Republic. They welcomed the significant progress that had been made by the Government of the Central African Republic in implementing the Bangui Agreements and introducing major political and economic reforms.

30. They welcomed with satisfaction the Security Council's decision to include support for the holding of legislative elections on 22 November and 13 December 1998 in the mandate of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA).

31. Recalling the importance of the role of MINURCA in maintaining a climate of security and stability favourable to the strengthening of the national reconciliation process in the Central African Republic, they stressed that the activities of MINURCA should cease only when the electoral processes had been completed and sufficient progress had been made in effecting national reconciliation. They urged friendly countries to participate in that international force.

32. Stressing the need for constructive dialogue between all segments of the Burundian population, they welcomed the debate that was taking place inside the country and the current dialogue at Arusha between Burundians inside and outside the country.

33. Recalling the various appeals that had been made for the lifting of the embargo against Burundi, they warmly welcomed the decision that was taken on 23 January 1999 to suspend the embargo.

34. They expressed their concern at the ongoing border, land and maritime dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria. They reiterated the need for both countries to refrain from taking any action that could exacerbate the tension between them. They expressed support for efforts to secure a peaceful solution to the dispute through legal channels. They invited both parties to be bound by the protective measures laid down in the court ruling of 15 March 1996 and by

the imminent decision of the International Court of Justice concerning the substance of the case. Lastly, they appealed to the international community to help keep the peace between Cameroon and Nigeria, before, during and after the verdict of the International Court of Justice in The Hague, which currently had the matter of the border dispute before it.

35. They expressed their grave concern at the renewed outbreak of hostilities in the Congo following the perpetration of acts of destabilization by armed groups, causing huge losses of life and material damage and hindering the implementation of commitments undertaken by the authorities to take measures to promote national reconciliation, rebuild the country and relaunch the democratic process. They expressed their willingness to contribute to the establishment of real peace in the Congo, allowing the Congolese people to devote all their efforts to the realization of social and economic development.

36. They called on the current Chairman of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa to take and oversee any initiative that might provide support for the re-establishment or consolidation of peace and for sustainable national reconciliation and reconstruction in the conflict-torn countries of the subregion.

37. They recognized that unusual and massive movements of populations, particularly in the aftermath of armed conflict in certain countries of the subregion, constituted a grave threat to domestic peace, and urged each Government to manage migratory flows more effectively and efficiently and to better control their borders.

38. They called on the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to take swift action, following the practice in other regions of the world, to support States faced with the problems of massive migrations as a result of armed conflict in Central Africa.

39. They appealed to the United Nations and the international community to assist in implementing the action programme of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa.

40. They welcomed the fact that the current summit meeting was being held just as the United Nations had completed its celebrations of the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of peacekeeping operations. They further reiterated their deep attachment to the promotion of human rights, democracy, the rule of law and prosperity in Central Africa.

41. Lastly, they reaffirmed their support for the United Nations and its Secretary-General, and urged that the ceaseless efforts of the Organization to promote, maintain and consolidate peace and security in Africa in general and in the subregion of Central Africa in particular should be intensified and based on increased consensus-building with the countries and regional bodies concerned.

42. They expressed their gratitude to President Paul Biya of the Republic of Cameroon, and to the Cameroonian Government and people for their warm reception and outstanding hospitality.